

TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT JUSTICE ALLIANCE

*Appropriations Subcommittee on Judicial and Corrections on Governor's Proposed FY 23
Budget Adjustment, H.B 5037*



2/16/2022

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Gemini Rorie and I am a Justice Advisor with the [Connecticut Justice Alliance](#) (CTJA) and I'm writing this testimony to communicate my strong opposition for HB 5037. The CTJA is a statewide youth-adult partnership working to end the criminalization of youth. The Alliance includes Justice Staff, Justice Advisors, and Steering Committee members, which includes lawyers, researchers, clinicians, and social workers, who work across issues areas such as mental/behavioral health, family advocacy, substance abuse, youth services, LGBTQ+ issues, legal representation, education, community and residential services, and public policy reform.

It's thoughtful to consider putting more money into MYI, I truly believe youth is our future and investing in them is important. My concern is the fact the proposed budget doesn't specify what type of education or the type of staffing the money will be going to. I don't want it to be overlooked that there are approximately 60-70% kids that are under 18 that are special education students currently at Manson. Over 60% have a confirmed mental health diagnosis. I'm asking for this proposed bill to make sure there are considerations to mental health and adequately meeting these kids' mental health needs and providing care. The findings from the Dept. of Justice showed MYI is violating the constitutional rights of young people that are currently confined there. I learned from this investigation & from young people that were just recently formerly incarcerated at MYI that the institution is utilizing solitary confinement, and not currently meeting the needs of the youth confined there. We must use this funding to do more.

Sincerely,

Gemini Rorie